

# **OUTDOOR FIRE**

# **SAFETY**

**Anyone who has felt the warmth of a fire and enjoyed its friendly light knows that fire is not always a devastating blaze. Fire, along with air, water and earth, was considered a basic element by our ancestors. Long ago they learned to use and control fire. It was, perhaps, their first tool.**

**Most people are careful with fire. They build their fires in the right places and at the right time. They keep them the proper size and put them out before leaving them.**

**But forest fires raging out of control - wildfires - are an awesome and terrifying sight. They have aroused fear from earliest times. The damage they do is appalling, and this wasteful burning goes on year after year. The best way to keep forest fire damage low is to keep forest fires from getting started.**

**A few tips are provided here to help you enjoy fire safely outdoors. For more information, contact your local fire protection agency.**

**Remember, Only YOU Can Prevent Forest Fires.**



# Debris

**Check local laws on burning. Some communities allow burning only during specified hours. Others forbid it entirely.**

**Check the weather; don't burn on dry, windy days.**

**Consider the alternatives to burning. Some types of debris - such as leaves, grass, and stubble - may be of more value if used for compost. Household items such as plastics, glass, paper, and aluminum cans can be recycled or hauled to a local sanitary landfill.**

**If you must burn debris, do it safely.**

## Household Trash

**If you must burn trash, don't pile it on the ground. It will not burn completely and will be easily blown around. Local fire officials can recommend a safe receptacle for burning trash. It should be placed in a cleared area, away from overhead branches and wires.**

**Never attempt to burn aerosol cans; heated cans will explode. Flying metal from an exploding can might cause and injury. Burning trash scattered by such an explosion has caused the spread of many fires.**

## Agricultural Residue & Forest Litter

**Be sure you are fully prepared before burning off your field or garden spot. To control the fire, you will need a source of water, a bucket, and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire.**

**If possible, a fire line should be plowed around the area to be burned. Large fields should be separated into small plots for burning one at a time. Be sure to stay with your fire until it is out.**

**Before doing any burning in a wooded area, contact your local forester. The forester will weigh all factors, explain them to you, and offer technical advice.**

## Lanterns, Stoves, & Heaters

**Cool all lanterns, stoves, and heaters before refueling. Place them on the ground in a cleared area and fill them. If fuel spills, move the appliance to a new clearing before relighting it. Recap and store flammable liquid containers in a safe place. Never light lanterns and stoves inside a tent, trailer, or camper. If you use a lantern or stove inside a tent or trailer, be sure to have adequate ventilation. Always read and follow instructions provided by the manufacturer.**

## Spark Arresters

**All types of equipment and vehicles are required to have spark arresters. Chain saws, portable generators, cross-country vehicles, and trail bikes - to name a few - require spark arresters if used in or near grass, brush, or a wooded area. To make sure that the spark arrester is functioning properly, check with the dealer or contact your local Forest Service or State forestry office.**

## Smoking

**When smoking is permitted outdoors, safe practices require at least a 3-foot clearing around the smoker. Grind out your cigarette, cigar, or pipe tobacco in the dirt. Never grind it on a stump or log. It is unsafe to smoke while walking or riding a horse or trail bike. Use your ashtray while in your car.**

## Charcoal Briquets

**After using the burning charcoal briquets, “dunk ‘em!” Don’t sprinkle. Soak the coals with lots of water; stir them and soak again. Be sure they are out - cold! Carefully feel the coals with your bare hands to be sure.**

**Since people cause most wildfires, we all have a part in preventing them. We can be more careful ourselves. And whoever we are and wherever we are, we can influence others to use more care with fires.**

**Remember, a little extra care takes only a few minutes of your time.  
And it could prevent a wildfire.**

